

## 'Come on Baby, Let's do the Twist'

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Public Affairs

"Here lies the body of a servicemember who lacked the intelligence to listen to important information, the wisdom to act upon it, and the love for his family and friends to share it."

Or ...

"Attention to orders. For the brave acts of selflessness and love of humanity while risking his own life, we present the Airman's Medal to 1st Lt. Brian Grey..."

Which one of these scenarios do you want your parents to hear? When Lt. Grey arrived to Warren, the only thought that repeatedly came to his mind was that no one mentioned the wind never stopped blowing. Other than that inconvenience, the area, its people and the wildlife defied his concepts rooted deeply in city life. He was liking his assignment more and more.

During in-processing, Lt. Grey was briefed about the high plains and its fickle weather patterns. Thunderstorms and tornados were briefed as prevalent, but it had to be similar to the hurricane hazards of his native East Coast — one catch, they give little advanced warning in which to act or plan. The time to plan for action was now.

In the course of weeks Lt. Grey had found a home and prepared his family well. Coming into the severe thunderstorm and tornado season, Lt. Grey had established a family communication plan his spouse and children could execute regardless of how they were separated. Their new house had been evaluated for structural problems in the event of a strong windstorm. He had taken special care to set up a section of the basement with a duffle bag full of provisions and a box of food, water, and home survival gear. One Sunday he even practiced a tornado drill with his family — even though the popcorn and soda he staged in the basement probably wasn't going to be a normal provision of the real thing. They played board games for an hour by flashlight and listened to a local radio station for fun. The kids loved it.

Life went on as it normally does for families until a fateful June evening when the sky was a little darker and the wind a little stronger. As the howling sound of the wind grew stronger, the children ran inside the home yelling that there was lots of stuff flying around in the air outside near a dark cloud coming toward their neighborhood. Immediately the family went to the basement and took shelter. In a matter of seconds the sounds of shattering glass upstairs could be heard along with the whimpers of scared children downstairs — then all was quiet.

Tuned to the radio, the Greys heard sound bites and newscasts that a tornado watch was in effect and one had passed through South Cheyenne. The all clear was given, and everyone ventured upstairs. In all, the windows on the south side of the house were blown in, but for the most part leaving the house unscathed. Outside the house there was damage to one of the vehicles from a broken tree branch and there were roof shingles scattered throughout the lawn.

Other houses fared as well, some worse. A neighborhood check revealed there was one person who was trapped in their living room after a tree collapsed on the roof, and one person received injuries from broken glass when they were standing in the same room. Lt. Grey assisted his injured neighbor by stopping the bleeding and treating for shock. He called emergency services and aided the trapped neighbor by keeping him calm and shutting down the utilities from the outside of the house.

Despite the austere conditions, Lt. Grey kept his cool and used his training to help himself and family, and his neighbors who weren't as prepared. For his actions, he reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Editors Note: The story and characters are fictitious and are designed to illustrate a good state of preparedness.

## Tornadoes For Dummies

### Fujita Damage Scale (F-scale)

#### F0 Gale Tornado 40-72 mph

Damage to chimneys; breaks branches off trees; damage sign boards.

#### F1 Moderate Tornado 73-112 mph

Peels shingles off roofs; mobile homes pushed off foundations and autos off roads.

#### F2 Significant Tornado 113-157 mph

Roofs torn off frame houses; mobile homes demolished; large trees snapped.

#### F3 Severe Tornado 158-206 mph

Roofs and some walls torn off well-constructed houses; trees in forest uprooted; heavy cars lifted off the ground and thrown.

#### F4 Devastating Tornado 207-260 mph

Well-constructed houses leveled; weak-foundation houses blown off; cars thrown strong frame houses lifted off foundations and disintegrated; automobiles-sized missiles fly through the air; trees debarked.

### Nearby Necessities for Nasty Weather

#### F0 Gale Tornado 40-72 mph

Have disaster supplies on hand:

#### F1 Moderate Tornado 73-112 mph

- Flashlight and extra batteries  
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries

#### F2 Significant Tornado 113-157 mph

- First aid kit and manual  
- Emergency non-perishable food  
- Water - three gallons per person  
- Non-electric can opener  
- Essential medicines  
- Cash and credit cards

#### F3 Severe Tornado 158-206 mph

- Comfort aids for small children (toys, games, stuffed animals)  
- Develop an emergency Comm plan

#### F4 Devastating Tornado 207-260 mph

- If family members are apart during a work or school day, have a plan for reuniting, accounting for potential phone outages

#### F5 Incredibly Tornado 261-318 mph

- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact."  
- Ensure everyone in the family knows the the contact person's information.

### Weak Tornadoes (F0 - F1)

\* 69 percent of all tornadoes

\* Less than 5 percent of tornado deaths

### Strong Tornadoes (F2 - F3)

\* 29 percent of all tornado deaths

\* Nearly 30 percent of all tornado deaths

### Violent Tornadoes (F4 - F5)

\* Only 2 percent of all tornado deaths

\* 70 percent of all tornado deaths

\* Winds greater than 205 mph

A three to five minute steady tone will signal a natural disaster such as a tornado.

**Indoors:** Go to the lowest level of the building. If there is no basement, go to a small inner hallway or a small inner room with no windows such as a bathroom or closet.

**Outdoors:** Lie flat in a ditch or a low lying area if there is no shelter available.

Though violent tornadoes like this one make up only two percent of all recorded tornadoes, they account for nearly 70 percent of all tornado related deaths in the United States.